can you stake me before the sun goes down?

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by fuelthisflame

Summary

vampire hannibal lecter. vampire hunter will graham. will becomes hannibal's newest obsession. will just wants to get paid.

Will Graham was not a prideful man. He was a vampire hunter, and a damn good one at that, but he wasn't the least bit smug about it. He's learned that if you get too prideful you get bit. Holding your head high exposes your neck.

He keeps his head down and isn't afraid to get his hands dirty, which is how he ends up tasked with killing Count Hannibal Lecter.

Will almost outright refuses, until he hears the reward sum. Usually he's not moved by money, but as the summer heat rises a kill is harder to come by.

Many men had assumed that Count Lecter would be an easy kill. Unlike most other vampires who are typically nomadic, he rarely leaves his castle, a location well known and feared. They assume that by entering the castle, they will have cornered the vampire, when really they've walked right into the monster's mouth.

Knowing this leaves Will standing outside of the castle in the biting cold air, eyes set on the single visibly lit room.

Appearing unarmed, he plans to play the role of the lost soul. Someone from a few towns over who ended up disoriented in the forest, he saw the castle in the distance and wandered towards it, hoping for warmth and a way home.

Inside his bag he carries a half-empty container of water, a small sum of money, an assortment of books and journals, and underneath it all a single wooden stake. He's only ever needed one shot.

Just as he's about to step forward towards the castle, something in the air shifts behind him.

He turns around, careful in his movement to appear curious and caught off-guard, giving no clue that he knows who the man before him is.

"Hello," Count Lecter says, with a slight tilt to his head.

"Hi," Will replies, releasing a sigh of apparent relief. "I seem to have gotten lost, I haven't got a clue as to where I am, do you think you could point me to the nearest town?"

A slight glint of amusement crosses Hannibal's eyes before his mask slips back on. He smiles, fangs still prominent even while retracted.

"You'll find the nearest town about a forty-five minute walk southeast," He pauses, "Of course, it is getting quite cold, and I would hate for you to find yourself turned around in such a large forest. If you would come in, I can provide you with a bed and a warm meal," Hannibal offers.

"That would be wonderful, sir," Will replies, head tilted downward as he looks up at the man. If he can get the vampire wrapped around his finger, as he has successfully done with many others, this whole ordeal will be much easier.

Hannibal leads him into the castle, only illuminated by a few scattered candles.

“I apologize for the dismal lighting, I have rather good night vision and was not expecting a guest.”

Will nearly doesn’t respond, caught up in admiring the rather opulent room and decor, many of the items of furniture being quite dated, though that is to be expected with Count Lecter being estimated to be about two centuries old, perhaps more.

“Oh, that’s quite alright. I have no room to complain, I’m lucky to have stumbled upon you at all. Thank you, again.”

“Of course. Though, I realize I have been rather rude in not offering an introduction. I am Count Hannibal Lecter, though please, just call me Hannibal. I’ve come to find that many are intimidated by me when using my full title, and I wish for you to be comfortable in your stay here, however brief.”

“Alright. Thank you, Hannibal.”

Hannibal smiles, and Will is again magnetically drawn to his teeth. He meets Hannibal’s eyes after a moment too long, and fears he’s already been found out.

Hannibal holds his gaze for a moment, before leading him into a finely decorated dining room.

Will doesn’t know if he should feel relieved.

The table is almost ridiculously long, with every seat already fit with a full dining set, without even the smallest trace of dust. It’s eerie and strange, seeing how Hannibal seemingly lives alone.

“Please sit,” Hannibal ushers him into the seat adjacent to the head of the table. “I’ll prepare us something quick, I’ll only be ten minutes. Would you like anything to keep you occupied? Perhaps a book? I have quite the extensive collection.”

Will is already shaking his head by the time Hannibal finishes, “I’m quite alright, thank you, though.”

Hannibal disappears into what must be a kitchen, and Will is left alone to ponder. He hadn’t expected Hannibal to be such a welcoming, almost doting houseguest. By reputation, he was a ruthless, sadistic, cold-blooded killer. He saw people as nothing more than a source of food, and rumor had it that sometimes he didn’t even drink from his victims, merely killing for sport.

Yet Will had only been his guest for less than half an hour, and he already felt nearly smothered with hospitality.

Now that he was left alone, freed from Hannibal’s overwhelming presence, he took a moment to evaluate the circumstances. He was alone in Count Hannibal Lecter’s castle, practically a

mouse having walked right into a trap. And yet he stayed put where Hannibal had asked him to, instead of plunging a stake into him the second he turned his back.

Will had heard of vampires using some form of mind manipulation, but had never experienced it himself and accredited it to humans getting flustered in the presence of the notoriously, supernaturally attractive creatures. Will Graham didn't get flustered, or embarrassed, or anything of the sort, yet he was beginning to question if he was capable of killing the man. The creature, he reminded himself. Hannibal was more beast than man.

Maybe he could keep playing the part of a lost traveler and leave come morning. No killing involved. He'd have to forfeit the reward money, but really he'd be able to survive just fine.

No. Hannibal is a monster, a killer. He needs to die.

It's ridiculous. Most of his run-ins with vampires were feral, violent times that left him feeling no remorse as he witnessed their final moments. None of them had ever offered him a bed to sleep in, or warm food when he hadn't eaten properly in days. He had expected Hannibal to jump him the second the front door closed. Why hadn't he?

Hannibal returned just then, and Will shook off the internal conflict to smile up at him.

He carried only one plate, which he set in front of Will before disappearing again. He re-entered with a glass of wine for each of them, settling himself into the chair next to Will's.

"Not hungry?" Will asks, for the sake of appearing unassuming.

"I'm alright. Eat your food," Hannibal gestures to the plate with his glass, bringing Will's attention to the simple dish; red meat with an assortment of local vegetables.

He can't quite place what the meat is, though it has been quite a while since he has been able to afford meat to begin with. Truthfully, he's too hungry to give it much thought.

He profusely thanks and compliments Hannibal, more honestly than he'd like to admit. The vampire basks in Will's words as if they were the sun, if he was able to do such a thing.

Hannibal clears the table and returns with near inhuman speed, (because he is not human, Will reminds himself), refilling both of their glasses.

There's something about the wine, too. It's a red, but Will can't quite place much else.

"I understand if you are tired and wish to rest, but I have greatly enjoyed your company thus far. May I invite you to join me in the library?" Hannibal asks. Will can't find it in him to refuse.

He considers that this may be his chance. Hannibal must be so lonely to have this apparent desperation for companionship. Will could foster friendliness, lull the creature into a false sense of security before he strikes. He's already made himself out to be an innocent, naïve and pitiful traveler.

Hannibal must be truly infatuated with him, for whatever reason, if Will has gone this long without Hannibal attempting to kill him. If the legends reign true, he would have been drained the second he walked through the door.

Lost in thought, Will ends up disoriented to find himself standing in the middle of Hannibal's extensive library. The shelves are nearly twice as tall as he is, the walls lined with books as well as several shelves lined up to form aisles. Hannibal leads him to the fireplace, gesturing for him to sit in one of two chairs.

Will can't help but relax in the warmth of the fire, unconsciously tilting his head back as it warms his bones. After a moment of reprieve, he turns his attention back to Hannibal, who wears an expression that can only be described as hungry.

He clears his throat, snapping Hannibal back to reality, his attention shifting away from the enticing pulse he can hear beneath his skin.

"I really should thank you again," Will says, "if I hadn't run into you I probably would be sleeping under a tree right now," he winces, knowing he isn't even lying.

"Well, I'd say it's lucky for both of us that we've run into each other," Hannibal replies.

"Lucky for you to have a disheveled stranger staying a night in your castle?" Will accidentally retorts, momentarily forgetting the game he's supposed to be playing

Hannibal seems amused by this. "Yes," he responds, "it gets quite boring out here all by my lonesome. A new face is refreshing, especially one like yours."

Will nearly blushes at the implications, but thankfully has learned to control himself better than that.

Suddenly, he begins to feel exhausted. The adrenaline of the day must finally be catching up to him.

He makes a show of yawning, stretching his arms and tilting his head back, the whole ordeal. He doesn't miss the way Hannibal's eyes flick to his exposed neck, again.

"Let me show you to a room," Hannibal stands, Will sluggishly following.

Hannibal glides through the dimly lit hallways with Will trailing behind him. Whether it's due to the vampiric night vision or centuries of living in the castle, he effortlessly makes each turn in the darkness.

He abruptly stops in front of a door, Will colliding right into his back. If he accidentally inhales and is now cursed with the knowledge of how dizzyingly good the count smells, Will excuses it with his exhaustion and the two very full glasses of wine.

"My room is just over there," Hannibal gestures to a door down the hall, "shall you need anything. I will be retiring as well, and I do hope that you will stay for breakfast." He smiles, and Will can't help but reflexively smile back in his daze.

Will steps into the room and the door shuts behind him, enveloping him in further darkness, save for the moonlight shining through the curtains.

Alone, Will can finally ponder what the hell he's doing. Hannibal should've been dead by now, the weight of the wooden stake inside of his bag a reminder.

Perhaps if he wakes up early, as he usually does, he'll be able to catch the vampire off guard.

He dresses down, leaving clothing scattered across the floor, and practically falls into the bed, the exhaustion from earlier truly taking hold.

He dreams thoroughly that night, which is strange because dreams are usually a rare occurrence for him. Hannibal is the center of all of them, and some of the dreams are more nice than others. He wakes many times through the night, almost after every dream.

When he finally wakes for real, the sun is high in the sky. So much for his plan.

He dresses quickly, remembering Hannibal's request that they have breakfast. For some reason he feels like the vampire wouldn't tolerate much rudeness. He doesn't stop to investigate why he's so invested in what Hannibal wants of him, or why he's so eager to meet him downstairs.

He reaches for his bag. It's distinctly lighter. The stake is gone.

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